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Mobile app collects data on small wetlands

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In a major attempt to protect coastal wetlands in the wake of climate crisis, a mobile app has been developed to collect the complete datasets of smaller wetlands across the coastal region of the

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Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) in line with a memorandum of understanding between them. The mobile app is aimed to generate a centralised digital database of the smaller wetlands (2.2 ha) across the country. Such smaller wetlands cover an area of more than five lakh hectares across the country, while Kerala is having as many as 2592 smaller wetlands.

The app will be used to collect field level data of the wetlands that include geospatial profile, size, water and soil quality, farmed species, pollution status, illegal construction and other biodiversity specialities.

"The concept is to integrate field-level regional wetland data to geospatial datasets so as to enable a comprehensive monitoring system in the wake of climate change and wetland vulnerabilities", said CMFRI director Dr A

Gopalakrishnan during the launch of the mobile app on Monday.

The app could become a game changer towards national wetland resilience by bridging the gap between satellite and ground data, he said. "Continuous monitoring will help provide village-level real time advisories for aquafarmers and alerts on climatic phenomenon in the future", he said.

Dr Gopalakrishnan said the climate-related events such as floods and runoffs have changed the physio-chemical profile of several wetlands.

"Many fish farmers and fishermen suffered economic loss due to washing away of cages, salinity changes in aquafarms, coastal ecosystem changes and so on. A digital common platform on health status of wetlands of the country may easily help to understand such vulnerable regions," Dr Gopalakrishnan said.

The initiative of monitoring the wetlands is carried out by the National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) project wing of the CMFRI. The data collection using the mobile app will be done by registered researchers, farmers and stakeholders while the experts associated with the task will validate the data and it will be stored in the central database.